

We're in that 'tweener stage of seasons and I'm pushing heavier reds while I can. Unique grapes (Ribolla Gialla, Aragonez and Bonarda!) along with old standards make up the mix this month. Enjoy!

Cheers, Herb

**Mark your calendars for the DPS/Pinewood Van Winkle Charity Tasting and Auction - April 8 & 9. Details and ticketing info coming shortly.**

P.S. - My non-Wine Club selections for the month aren't wine, but beer. I chose **Service Brewing Quad** and **Innis & Gunn Kindred Spirits**. The Quad is a Belgian-style quadruple brewed with mission figs, raisins, dates & fennel seed. Perfect for the transition to Spring. The Innis & Gunn is a Scottish stout aged and matured with Tullamore DEW Irish whiskey barrel staves. Slightly sweet, smooth and very drinkable. I've yet to find one of their barrel aged beers I didn't like.

### **2016 Villa Brici Ribolla Gialla (Primorska region, Slovenia)**

**Tasting Notes:** Ribolla Gialla is a great alternative to Pinot Grigio. Unfortunately, it's hard finding a starter Ribolla Gialla. Until now! This example, from Slovenia no less, has a crisp lime aroma. It has more body and complexity on the palate than the typical Pinot Grigio, with bright and fresh lemon/lime fruit and hints of mineral. This white has a slightly creamy texture on the mid-palate and the finish has crisp melon fruit, floral notes and nice length. This is a great white for the start of Spring and a great alternative to your regular Pinot Grigio.

**Food Pairing:** I like the versatility of this white. It has acidity and flavor, making it great with food. I'd pair this with everyday meals, as well as poultry and lighter pork dishes.

### **2015 Old Pearl Chardonnay (California)**

**Tasting Notes:** This is a solid, typical California-style Chardonnay that's a good value relative to its peers. It starts with aromas of ripe mandarin oranges. It's medium-bodied on the palate with ripe apricot and tropical fruits. There is a nice creaminess on the mid-palate as well. The finish has good length and bright tangerine fruit. This Chardonnay has ripe, but not overripe, fruit, good texture and a pleasing finish - all the qualities required for Herb's Wine Club.

**Food Pairing:** This white has a fresher food profile, so I'd serve it with lighter-flavored dishes. Pair it with protein filled salads, weightier fish entrées (without heavy sauce) and lighter chicken dishes.

### **2016 Fog Bank Vineyards Pinot Noir (California)**

**Tasting Notes:** This is everything I'm looking for in an everyday Pinot Noir. Finding an everyday Pinot Noir is much harder because most of them taste more like the typical Syrah or Zinfandel-based, overripe red. The Fog Bank has a nice aroma of cherry/red berry fruit. It's clean on the palate with bright red fruits that are perfectly ripe and have just enough acidity for needed structure. The finish has darker red fruits, hints of caramel and nice length. This is a great wine and a great value!

**Food Pairing:** I think Pinot Noir pairs nicely with salmon off the grill. Otherwise pair with light pork dishes or even slightly heavier beef cuts. Just don't overdo it.

### **2013 Joao Portugal Ramos Villa Santa Reserva Red (Alentejano, Portugal)**

**Tasting Notes:** This is a five grape blend (mostly Aragonez and Touriga Nacional) from the Alentejano region of Portugal and sees nine months of oak. It's a great example of the quality coming from Portugal and especially this up-and-coming region. The 2013 has a lush mixed berry aroma that's clean on the palate with liqueur-like red berry fruit and balancing acidity. The fruit is quite delicate and feminine, yet still has a lot of flavor. The finish has ripe tannins, soft berry fruit and nice length.

**Food Pairing:** Try this with an everyday meal like pizza or burgers. It's not full-bodied, but it does have lots of flavor. Just don't serve it with anything too heavy.

### **2016 Perimeter Cabernet Sauvignon (California)**

**Tasting Notes:** When I spend \$10 on a red, I'm usually buying European. It's a big deal when I recommend a West Coast Cab, like this Perimeter. It's a winner. Aromas of fresh dried cherries lead to clean, fresh cherry fruit on the palate and light oak flavors with nice weight and good acidity. This Cab isn't candied and overripe, like its peers, so you won't mind having that second glass. The finish has a hint of spice, light oak notes, cherry/berry fruit, balanced tannins and nice length. This is a solid wine and a solid value.

**Food Pairing:** This Cabernet can be a versatile food wine, in that, it's not too heavy or too light. It will pair nicely with just about anything from the grill from poultry to beef.

### **2013 Trapiche Broquel Bonarda (Mendoza, Argentina)**

**Tasting Notes:** Broquel is Trapiche's mid-range offering, and I especially like this Bonarda, Argentina's alternative red. To me, this Bonarda is a mashup between Malbec and Cabernet. It has the blue fruit flavors of Malbec and brambly fruit flavors of Cabernet. On the palate, this red is dense with concentrated blue fruits - black raspberry and blueberry - and nice vanilla notes. It has good palate weight and a great fruit component. The finish has bright, black fruits, hints of caramel, ripe tannins and nice length. Great example of the varietal!

**Food Pairing:** My subconscious won't let me type anything, but - serve this with beef or lamb, preferably from the grill. It's heavy enough to hold up to any heavier meat dish.